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DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SE

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TAGS: MARR MASS TU

SUBJECT: 2005 DECA: MOVING THE BASING RELATIONSHIP WITH
TURKEY FORWARD ONE INSPECTION AT A TIME

REF: ANKARA 7038

Classified By: Political-Military Counselor Timothy A. Betts, reasons 1
.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The 2005 DECA inspection was incrementally more positive and productive than the remarkably productive 2004 inspection (reftel). The Turkish delegation was generally constructive in its approach, and efforts by the US delegation to immediately resolve some issues and to question several Turkish requirements helped to contain the list of Turkish demands. Several unresolved issues of contention during the 2004 meetings, including the lack of an APO agreement, were not even raised by the Turks this year; potentially contentious issues related to armed guards and patrols at the Bayrakli installation in Izmir were defused; and the Turkish delegation went to great pains in their outbrief to list areas of demonstrable progress by the US to resolve outstanding issues and to list several issues the US had raised. Nonetheless, the process remains one-sided, with the Turks interpreting the DECA's povision of an annual "inspection" literally. The Mission will continue the efforts begun in 2004-5 to question unreasonable requirements and to press for equal Turkish consideration of US operational concerns. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) The annual inspection of U.S. military facilities located in Ankara, Izmir and at Incirlik Air Base as required under the bilateral Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement (DECA) was held from Nov. 14 to 18. Major General Sefer Ozturk, who took over as chief of the TGS J-5 Agreements and Operations Division in 2004 and led the Turkish delegation, set a positive tone for the inspection, as he did in 2004, by calling it a "joint compliance visit" and urging both sides to work constructively to resolve outstanding issues (reftel).

425th ABG - DEFUSING ISSUES AS THEY AROSE

¶3. (C) As in 2004, the US Detachment 1 inspection at Balgat Base in Ankara was uneventful. At the Bayrakli installation in Izmir -- home to the 425th Air Base Group which supports US troops at NATO's Component Command Air Izmir and US military operations in Eskisehir, Istanbul and Ankara, and administers the Cigli Air Base turnover agreement -- TGS identified three concerns: 1) Armed U.S. military personnel guarding the Bayrakli entrance, 2) Armed roving patrols of

residences, 3) No US request to TGS for approval to change the base name from Air Base Squadron to Air Base Group.

¶ 14. (C) GEN Ozturk explained the TGS concern with the first two issues as the possibility of an accidental weapons discharge in public areas. The Bayrakli compound is located on a main road with regular commercial traffic and 425th housing units are located in the heart of Izmir. Despite the historic use of armed guards at the Izmir Hilton Hotel which previously housed the 425th, the first issue -- a carry-over from 2004, was resolved with a US decision for guards to wear civilian clothing and to consider use of a Turkish contractor to provide security. The second issue was defused with a decision for roving patrols to travel unarmed. On the third issue, the US side disputed TGS interpretation of the DECA provision dealing with name change but agreed to submit a letter of notification to TGS regarding the base change from a squadron to a group.

"ENVIRONMENTAL" ISSUES DOMINATE INCIRLIK TALKS

¶ 15. (SBU) At the 39th Air Base Wing on Incirlik Air Base, TGS did not raise the two most contentious topics of the 2004 DECA inspections: 1) APO Agreement: the need for an Armed Services Post Office (APO) agreement, 2) Dependent Hires: the demand that the US determine a fixed number of job slots in defined categories for dependent hires and to apply for work permits for each. The US side effectively ended discussions on these issues in 2004 by providing samples of US APO agreements with other countries, clearly identifying our red lines on both issues and offering dates for a meeting to discuss a mutually-acceptable solution. The MFA is charged with pulling together a consolidated GOT position but has

rejected our repeated offers to meet because it cannot gain agreement from other relevant ministries on a position that will meet our terms.

¶ 16. (SBU) Instead, TGS and the MFA representatives stressed the importance of the environment to Turkey, possibly driven by EU acquis requirements since Turkey began accession talks on Oct. 3.

Landfill: TGS has called for the US to close and cap the over 40 year old joint-use base landfill. The US side explained that the \$8-9 M required to cap the landfill had been requested, and if approved, would not be received until 2010 at the earliest. TGS could attempt to accelerate the timetable by notifying EUCOM at a high level that closing the landfill is a priority for Turkey. If so, TGS would need to demonstrate a rationale for its concern, e.g. documented health risk.

Trash Separation: TGS lamented the unhygienic conditions under which trash separators collect base recyclables and called on the US to provide running water. (Note: Under the DECA the US is responsible for both US-only and joint-use base services.) The US contract for trash disposal does not include trash separation. The lack of a US directive for trash separation was confirmed at the dump site, where workers were visibly nervous and vague in their responses to questions about who hired them. The US side agreed that the worker conditions are unhygienic and, given the lack of a directive for them to work on base, will rewrite the contract to specifically exclude trash separation. If the Turkish base command insists on keeping this facility on base, the 39th ABW command will consider in-home recycling options for American personnel, making the recycling effort Turkish-only.

The TGS outbrief stated that hot water and shower facilities should be provided to the trash separators but did not assign responsibility for this action.

Completed Actions: The most striking aspect of the TGS outbrief was the credit it gave to the US for actions completed, some of which had been done months or even one year earlier.

SETTING THE TONE FOR 2006

¶7. (SBU) COMMENT: Mission has noticed a definite improvement in both the tone and conduct of the DECA inspections over the past two years. That said, we consider problematic TGS' insistence on conducting the outbrief only in Turkish and not allowing the US the opportunity to formally outbrief our issues. Mission will review options to further level the playing field during the 2006 inspection, possibly to include development of suggested rules of engagement for inspection conduct to ensure fair and accurate representation of both Turkish and US concerns. END COMMENT.

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